

PHYSIOLOGY OF MANASA (PSYCHE) AS PER AYURVEDA AND MODERN CONCEPT

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ABSTRACT

Mental wellbeing holds a prominent position within the concept of Ayurveda, as highlighted in various Ayurvedic texts. Ayurveda underscores the interconnectedness of the Sharira and Sattva in all aspects of life. Its approach to health and disease is deeply rooted in the psychosomatic paradigm. Ayurvedic philosophy places a significant emphasis on the workings of the mind over those of the physical body. This emphasis is reflected in the definition of health, the understanding of the causes of diseases, the patient examination methodology, and the concept of the psychosomatic constitution, known as Prakruti. Comprehension of the mind's physiology, functions, and manifestations, as delineated in Ayurveda, becomes essential for diagnosis and treatment of mental illness. This article delves into the fundamental principles elucidating Manasa and its multifaceted functions and physiology.

KEYWORDS: Ayurveda, Physiology, Sharir Kriya, Mental, Manasa, Psyche.**INTRODUCTION**

Ayurveda *Acharya* conceptualizes life, or *Ayu*, as a harmonious amalgamation of the physical entity, *Sharira*, *Indriya*, *Sattva* and *Atma*. Serving as a crucial intermediary between the body and the soul, '*Manasa*' plays a pivotal role in the physiological and psychological regulation of mind and body. Human beings, endowed with superior intelligence, hold a unique position in the natural world, primarily due to their capacity and obligation to lead a conscious and purposeful life. However, this capacity hinges on the functions of both '*Manasa*' and '*Atma*.' The foundational understanding of health, as elucidated by *Acarya Sushruta*, emphasizes the harmonious equilibrium of *Dosha*, *Mala*, *Agni* and *Dhatu*. Synchronizing state of *Atma*, *Indriya* and *Manasa* plays a pivotal role in the holistic attainment of complete health.

This article endeavors to expound upon the physiology and operational mechanisms of '*Manasa*,' aiming to facilitate a deeper comprehension of human psychology. This understanding helps significantly in addressing and treating the complex psychosomatic and psychiatric diseases.

Physiology of Manasa

Physiology of the mind encompasses a broad array of elements, including the objects it engages with, its functions, the manner in which it operates through the *Manovaha Strotas* and its activities to regulate mental functioning or behavioral functioning of body. The objects of the mind encompass aspects that require thoughtful consideration, emotional contemplation, determination and hypothesis, etc. The mind functions as the controller of the sense organs are as follows:

- Maintaining self-restraint
- Facilitating hypothesis
- Considerations regarding the perceived objects
- Control of behavioral activities
- Synchronizing amongst the *Sharira*, *Indriya* and *Atma*

The actions of the mind can be understood in three primary stages as depicted in Figure 1

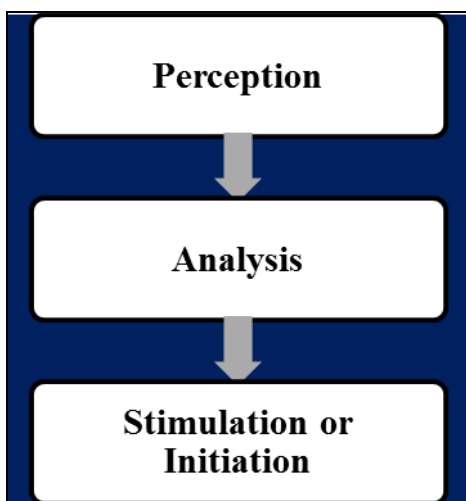


Figure 1: Stages of action of the mind.

1. Firstly, the stage of perception involves the cognitive or sensory reception of external stimuli.
2. This is followed by the process of analysis, where the mind undertakes various cognitive activities such as contemplation, consideration, hypothesis, emotional thinking, and determination.
3. Finally, the stage of stimulation or initiation involves the execution of motor reflexes and actions in response to the perceived stimuli, thereby linking the cognitive and sensory functions with the motor functions of the body.

Mano-Vyapara describes the diverse mental activities undertaken by the mind. It encompasses two types of mental operations; perceivable and the inferable. The former involves activities that are observable and cognitive, such as real cognition, pervasive cognition, imagination, sleep and memory. Notably, '*Viparyaya*' holds a significant position in the area of psychology.

Inferable mental transactions, categorized as '*Aparidrushta*', encompass a range of intricate psychological processes that are not directly perceptible. These include aspects such as restraint, peculiarity, habit, change and life force activity, etc. Understanding these aspects of the mind relies on the utilization of *Anumana* or *Aptopdesha*.

The regulation of the senses, involves the efficient coordination of the *Jnanedriyas* and *Karmendriyas* without any impairments in the sensory and motor organs that may hinder their functions, thereby ensuring a smooth operation of the bodily faculties. Restraint of the mind enabling one to focus on a specific task and adhere to a chosen path without succumbing to external distractions.

Vichara pertains to the discernment between right and wrong, feasible and infeasible, acceptable and unacceptable, allowing for sound judgment and decision-making. *Manas* manifests through both cognition and the absence of cognition. Knowledge arises when the

interrelated functioning of sensory objects, senses, and the mind, including the soul, is established.

Role of *Manovaha Srota*

Manovaha Srotasas as delineated by *Acharya* serve as the pathways through which the vital force of '*Manasa*' is circulated across the entirety of the body, imparting consciousness to all living cells. Although ancient texts do not provide a comprehensive account of these channels, *Acarya Cakrapani* suggests that the *Manovaha Srotasas* pervade the entire body, with a primary emphasis on the *Hrudaya* and *Dasha Dhamanis*. These channels particularly concerning conditions such as *Unmada*, *Apasmara*, *Mada*, *Murccha* and *Samnyasa*.

Role of *Manasa Doshas*

In Ayurveda, the concept of '*Manasa Doshas*' underscores the idea that the factors responsible for causing disturbances in the mind are known as *Doshas*. While three mental factors, namely, *Shudhha amsha*, *Rajasika amsha* and *Tamasika amsha* are recognized, *Shudhha amsha* is not considered a *Manasika Dosh* as it is perceived as unblemished and represents the beneficial aspect of the mental state. The remaining two, *Rajasa* and *Tamasa Doshas*, are acknowledged as the causative agents of various mental fluctuations, leading to the development of psychopathological conditions such as *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*, *Moha*, *Irshya*, *Mana*, *Shoka*, *Cittodvega*, *Harsha* and *Bhaya*, etc. These *Doshas*, when disturbed, can give rise to a spectrum of mental disorders.

CONCLUSION

In contemporary times, the prevalence of psychosomatic and psychiatric ailments underscores the pivotal role of the human psyche, primarily represented by the entity of '*Manasa*.' To comprehend the intricate dynamics of these conditions, it becomes imperative to have a profound understanding of the human psyche, including its behaviors, actions and reactions. Such comprehensive knowledge of '*Manasa*,' along with its functions and physiology, is indispensable for any physician aiming to address the psychological well-being of their patients alongside the physical aspects. In conclusion, an in-depth understanding of *Manasa*, its functions, and its physiology is imperative for physicians dealing with the intricate balance of psychological and physical well-being, especially in the current landscape where psychosomatic and psychiatric ailments are increasingly prevalent. This knowledge aids in the effective treatment of psychosomatic and psychiatric diseases, thereby enhancing the holistic approach to patient care.

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